

# Preaching and Biblical Theology

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## Introduction

The Southern Baptist Convention in this generation has won the battle for the inerrancy of scripture, but we must be vigilant for the next generation will have to strive anew for “the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).<sup>1</sup> Satan is the father of lies and extremely subtle, and he will certainly work to subvert the truth of the gospel in the coming days. Nor should we congratulate ourselves too quickly, for conservative churches may embrace the inerrancy of scripture, while denying in practice *the sufficiency* of God's word. We may say that scripture is God's inerrant word, while failing to proclaim it seriously from our pulpits.

In many evangelical churches today we truly have a famine for the word of God. We have sermon series in our conservative churches that feature in their titles television shows like *Gilligan's Island*, *Bonanza*, and *Mary Tyler Moore*. Our preaching often concentrates on steps to a successful marriage or how to raise children in our culture. Such sermons on family issues, of course, are fitting and needed. Unfortunately, two problems often surface in such sermons. First, what the scriptures *actually* say about these subjects is often neglected or skated over. How many sermons on marriage faithfully and urgently set forth what Paul actually says about the roles of men and women (Eph 5:22-33)? Or, is it the case that even we conservatives are somewhat abashed and embarrassed by what the scriptures say?

The second problem is of the same sort, and perhaps even more serious.

In many conservative churches pastors almost always preach on the horizontal level. The congregation is bombarded with sermons about marriage, raising children, success in business, overcoming depression, conquering fears, and so on and so forth. Again, all of these subjects must be faced in our pulpits. We must not go to the other extreme so that we never address these matters. But what is troubling is that these sort of sermons become the staple week in and week out, and the theological worldview that permeates God's word and is the foundation for all of life is passed over in silence. Our pastors turn into moralists rather like Dear Abby who give advice on how to live a happy life week after week.

Many congregations do not realize what is happening because the moral life that is commended accords, at least in part, with scripture and speaks to the felt needs of both believers and unbelievers. Pastors believe they must fill their sermons with stories and illustrations, so that the anecdotes flesh out the moral point enunciated. Every good preacher, naturally, illustrates the points being made. But sermons can become so chock-full of stories and illustrations that they are bereft of any theology.

I have heard evangelicals say rather frequently that we are doing fine in theology because congregations are not complaining about what we teach them. Such a comment is quite frightening, for we as pastors have the responsibility to proclaim “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). We cannot rely on congre-

gational polling to determine whether we are fulfilling our calling, for it may be the case that a congregation has never been seriously taught God's word, so that they are unaware of where we as pastors are failing. Amazingly those who make such comments rely on what people in pews want and feel rather than testing preaching by what the scriptures demand! Paul warns us that "fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:29). We are also reminded in 2 Tim 4:3-4 that "the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths." If we assess our preaching by what congregations desire, we may be cooking a recipe for heresy. I am not saying that our congregations are heretical, only that God's word rather than popular opinion must be the test of faithfulness. It is the calling of pastors to feed the flock with God's word, not to please people with what they desire to hear.

Moreover, too often our congregations are poorly trained by those of us who preach. We have fed them a steady diet of moralistic preaching, so that they are taught to be kind, forgiving, loving, good husbands and wives (all good things of course!), but the theological foundation for such is completely neglected. We have ample illustrations and stories to support the lifestyle we advocate, and people's hearts are warmed and even edified. Meanwhile, the wolf is lurking at the door. How could such preaching open the door for heresy? Not because the pastor himself is heretical. He may be fully orthodox and faithful in his own theology, while neglecting to preach to his people the

storyline and theology of the Bible. He has *assumed* theology in all his preaching. So, in the next generation or in two or three generations the congregation may inadvertently and unknowingly call a more liberal pastor. He too preaches that people should be good, kind, and loving. He too emphasizes that we should have good marriages and dynamic relationships. The people in the pew may not even discern the difference. The theology seems to be just like the theology of the conservative pastor who preceded him. And in a sense it is, for the conservative pastor *never* proclaimed or preached his theology. The conservative pastor believed in the inerrancy of scripture but not its sufficiency, for he did not proclaim all that the scriptures teach to his congregation.

Our ignorance of biblical theology surfaces constantly. I can think of two occasions in the last ten years or so (one in a large stadium by a speaker whose name I cannot recall) where a large crowd was gathered and people were invited to come forward to receive Christ as Savior. The sermon in the stadium was intended to be an evangelistic sermon, but I can honestly say that the gospel was not proclaimed at all. Nothing was said about Christ crucified and risen, or *why* he was crucified and risen. Nothing was said about why faith saves instead of works. Thousands came forward, and were no doubt duly recorded as saved. But I scratched my head as to what was really happening, and prayed that at least some were truly being converted. The same was true in a church service where I visited, for a stirring invitation to come forward and be saved was extended, but without any explanation of the gospel! Such preaching may fill up our churches with unconverted people, who are doubly dangerous because they have

been assured by pastors that they are converted and can never lose their salvation. And then from that day forward these same people are exhorted week after week with our new gospel in these postmodern times: Be nice.

### **Biblical Theology**

What does it mean to say that we should use biblical theology in preaching? Biblical theology, in contrast, to systematic theology focuses on the biblical storyline, whereas systematic theology, though it is informed by biblical theology, is atemporal. What is biblical theology? Don Carson argues that biblical theology

stands closer to the text than systematic theology, aims to achieve genuine sensitivity with respect to the distinctiveness of each corpus, and seeks to connect the diverse corpora using their own categories. Ideally, therefore, biblical theology stands as a kind of bridge discipline between responsible exegesis and responsible systematic theology (even though each of these inevitably influences the other two).<sup>2</sup>

In other words, biblical theology restricts itself more consciously to the message of the text or corpus under consideration. It asks what themes are central to the biblical writers in their historical context, and attempts to discern the coherence of such themes. Biblical theology focuses on the storyline of scripture—the unfolding of God’s plan in redemptive history, so that in every passage we preach we consider the place of that text in relationship to the whole storyline of the Bible. It should be apparent, therefore, that any systematic theology worthy of the name builds upon biblical theology, though systematicians also rightly explore themes that are implicit in biblical writings but do not receive sustained attention in the

biblical text.

The distinctive accent of biblical theology, as Brian Rosner notes, is that it “lets the biblical text set the agenda.”<sup>3</sup> Systematic theology, on the other hand, also poses questions to the text that reflect the questions or philosophical concerns of our day. Kevin Vanhoozer articulates the specific role of biblical theology in saying, “‘Biblical theology’ is the name of an interpretive approach to the Bible which assumes that the word of God is textually mediated through the diverse literary, and historically conditioned, words of human beings.”<sup>4</sup> Or, “To state the claim more positively, biblical theology corresponds to the interests of the texts themselves.”<sup>5</sup>

Carson expresses well the contribution of biblical theology, “But ideally, biblical theology, as its name implies, even as it works inductively from the diverse texts of the Bible, seeks to uncover and articulate the unity of *all* the biblical texts taken together, resorting primarily to the categories of those texts themselves. In this sense it is canonical biblical theology, ‘whole-Bible’ biblical theology.”<sup>6</sup> Biblical theology may limit itself to the theology of Genesis, the Pentateuch, Matthew, Romans, or even all of Paul. And yet biblical theology may also comprehend the entire canon of scripture, in which the storyline of the scriptures as a whole is integrated. Too often expositional preachers limit themselves to Leviticus, Matthew, or Revelation without considering the place they inhabit in the storyline of redemptive history. They isolate one part of the scripture from another, and hence preach in a truncated way instead of proclaiming the whole counsel of God. Gerhard Hasel rightly remarks that we need to do biblical theology in a way “that seeks to do justice to all dimensions of reality to which the

biblical texts testify.”<sup>7</sup> Doing such theology is not merely the task for seminary professors; it is the responsibility of all preachers of the word.

We think again about the differences between systematic and biblical theology. Carson again charts the way for us.<sup>8</sup> Systematic theology considers the contribution of historical theology, and hence mines the work of Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Edwards, etc. in formulating the teaching of scripture. Systematic theology attempts to speak directly to our cultural setting, so that it speaks forth the word of God to our day. Obviously, then, any good preacher must also be rooted in systematics to speak a profound and powerful word to his contemporaries. Biblical theology is more inductive and foundational, whereas in systematic theology the worldview of all of scripture is formulated. Carson rightly says that biblical theology is a “mediating discipline,” but systematic theology is a “culminating discipline.” We can say, then, that biblical theology is intermediate, functioning as a bridge between historical and literary study of scripture and dogmatic theology.

Biblical theology, then, works from the text in its historical context, but Scobie rightly argues that biblical theology is not a purely neutral or objective enterprise. The notion that we can neatly separate what it meant from what it means, as Kristler Stendahl claimed, is a chimera. Scobie rightly says the following about biblical theology: “Its presuppositions, based on a Christian faith commitment, include belief that the Bible conveys a divine revelation, that the Word of God in Scripture constitutes the norm of Christian faith and life, and that all the varied material in both Old and New Testaments can in some way be related to the plan and purpose

of the one God of the whole Bible. Such a Biblical Theology stands somewhere between what the Bible ‘meant’ and what it ‘means.’”<sup>9</sup> It follows, then, that biblical theology is not confined only to the New Testament or the Old Testament, but that it considers both Testaments together as the word of God. Indeed, biblical theology works from the notion that the canon of scripture functions as its norm, and thus both Testaments are needed to unpack the theology of scripture.

There is a wonderful dialectic between the OT and the NT in doing biblical theology. The NT represents the culmination of the history of redemption begun in the OT, and hence biblical theology is by definition a narrative theology. It captures the story of God’s saving work in history. The historical unfolding of what God has done may be described as salvation history or redemptive history. It is also fruitful to consider the scriptures from the standpoint of promise and fulfillment; what is promised in the OT is fulfilled in the NT. We must beware of erasing the historical particularity of OT revelation, so that we expunge the historical context in which it was birthed. On the other hand, we must acknowledge progress of revelation from the OT to the NT. Such progress of revelation recognizes the preliminary nature of the OT and the definitive word that comes in the NT. To say that the OT is preliminary does not downplay its crucial role, for we can only understand the NT when we have also grasped the meaning of the OT, and vice-versa. Some are hesitant to embrace typology, but such an approach is fundamental to biblical theology, for it is a category employed by the biblical writers themselves. Nor is typology limited to the NT, for the OT itself employs the exodus theme typologically, for both

Isaiah and Hosea, among others, predict a new exodus that is patterned after the first exodus. In the same way, the OT expects a new David who is even greater than the first David. We see in the OT itself, then, an escalation in typology, so that the fulfillment of the type is always greater than the type itself. Jesus is not only a new David, but the greater David. Typology acknowledges a divine pattern and purpose in history. God is the final author of scripture, i.e., the story is a divine drama, and God knows the end from the beginning, so that we as readers can see adumbrations of the final fulfillment in the OT.

### **Antecedent Theology**

When preaching the scriptures, it is vital to grasp where the book we are studying falls on the redemptive historical time line. Walter Kaiser reminds us that we should in particular consider the antecedent theology of each book as we preach the scriptures.<sup>10</sup> For instance, when we preach the book of Exodus, we must take into account the story thus far recorded in Genesis. We will scarcely interpret the message of Exodus rightly if we read it out of context. And the preceding context for Exodus is the message conveyed in Genesis. We learn in Genesis that God is the creator of all things, that he made human beings in his image, so that human beings would extend the Lord's rule over the entire world. Adam and Eve, however, failed to trust God and to obey the divine mandate. Creation was followed by the Fall, which introduced death and misery into the world. Nonetheless, the Lord promised that final victory would come through the seed of the woman (Gen 3:15). Intense conflict would ensue between the seed of the woman and the seed of the ser-

pent, but the former will prevail. We see in the rest of Genesis the battle between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, and we learn that the seed of the serpent is remarkably powerful. Cain slays Abel; the wicked overwhelm the righteous until only Noah and his family remain; human beings conspire to make a name for themselves in building the tower of Babel. Still, the Lord remains sovereign, for he judges Cain, destroys all but Noah and his family in the flood, and frustrates the designs of human beings at Babel.

The Lord makes a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, pledging that the victory promised in Gen 3:15 will come through their seed. The Lord will grant to them seed, land, and universal blessing. Genesis especially focuses on the promise regarding seed, for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob do not possess the land of promise, nor do they bless the entire world during their generation. The story concentrates on the promise of children, and Genesis concludes with the account of the twelve children the Lord granted Jacob.

So how is it that the theology of Genesis is crucial for reading the book of Exodus? The antecedent theology of Genesis is foundational for reading Exodus, for when Exodus opens with Israel multiplying exceedingly, we immediately recognize that the promise of many descendants from Genesis is being fulfilled. Pharaoh's attempt to kill all the male infants represents the designs of the seed of the serpent, demonstrating that Pharaoh himself is an offspring of the serpent. The battle between the seeds, which Genesis forecasted, continues, for Israel as the people of God represent the seed of the woman. The liberation of Israel from Egypt and the promise that they will conquer Canaan also represents a fulfillment of the Lord's

covenant with Abraham, for the promise of land is now beginning to be fulfilled. Israel now functions in a way as a new Adam in a new land. Like Adam they are to live in faith and obedience in the space that the Lord has given them. If we were to read Exodus without being informed by the antecedent message of Genesis, we would not perceive the significance of the story recounted. We would read the text apart from its context, and hence easily fall prey to an arbitrary reading.

The importance of antecedent theology is evident throughout the canon, and we must content ourselves with a few other examples here. For instance, the conquest under Joshua must be interpreted in light of the covenant with Abraham, so that the possession of Canaan is understood as the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham that he would enjoy the land of Canaan. On the other hand, the exile of both the northern (722 B.C.) and southern kingdoms (586 B.C.) threatened in the prophets and recorded in several books represents the fulfillment of the covenant curses of Lev 26 and Deut 27-28. If readers do not know the antecedent theology of the Mosaic covenant and the curses threatened in that covenant, they will scarcely be able to discern the import of both Israel and Judah being sent into exile. The promise of a new David (ex., Isa 9:6-7; Jer 23:5; 30:9; Ezek 34:23-24) reflects the covenant previously made with David that his dynasty would last forever. The Day of the Lord, which is so prominent in the prophets, must be interpreted in light of the promise made to Abraham.

And the same is true in the NT of course. We can scarcely understand the importance of the kingdom of God in the synoptics if we do not know the story line of the OT, and are ignorant of God's

covenants and promises to Israel. The significance of Jesus being the Messiah, the Son of Man, and the Son of God is all rooted in previous revelation. The book of Acts, as Luke indicates in his introduction, is a continuation of what Jesus began to do and teach, and hence it is informed both by the OT and the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The epistles are also grounded in the great saving work accomplished by Jesus Christ, and explicate and apply the saving message and the fulfillment of God's promises to established churches. Finally, Revelation makes sense as the culmination of the story. It is not just a bit added at the end to provide some endtime excitement. The many allusions to the OT demonstrate that Revelation is sketched against the backdrop of OT revelation. Nor does the book make any sense unless one sees that it stands as the completion of all that Jesus Christ taught and did.

This is not to say that the storyline of redemption has the same centrality in all the books of the canon. We think of books like Song of Solomon, Job, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, and Psalms. Even in these instances the foundational truths of creation and fall from Genesis are presupposed, and Israel's special role as God's covenant people is taken for granted and sometimes specifically articulated, especially in Psalms. Some of the Psalms, e.g., relate the story of Israel. Still, we are reminded of the diversity of the canon, and recognize that not every piece of literature has the same function.

The main truth for preachers here is that they must preach in such a way that they integrate their sermons into the larger biblical story of redemptive history. Those in the pews need to see the big picture of what God has been doing,

and how each part of scripture contributes to that picture. We do not want to preach in such a way that our people fail to see what God is doing, so that they lose the larger perspective.

### **Canonical Preaching**

As preachers, however, we must not restrict ourselves only to antecedent theology. We must also consider the whole of scripture, the canonical witness that we now have with the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, in preaching the scriptures. If we only preach antecedent theology, we will not accurately divide the word of truth, nor will we bring the Lord's message to the people of our day.

When we preach the first chapters of Genesis, then, we must also proclaim that the seed of the woman is Jesus Christ, and that the fall of creation into futility will be reversed through the work of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:18-25). Our hearers must see that the old creation is not the last word, but there is a new creation in Christ Jesus. We must show them from the book of Revelation that the end is better than the beginning, that the blessings of the original creation will be super-sized, so to speak, in the new creation.

So too, what can we as preachers say when preaching from Leviticus if we do not preach it in light of the fulfillment that has come in Jesus Christ? Surely we must proclaim that the OT sacrifices have been fulfilled in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Further, the regulations regarding food laws and cleanness must be interpreted canonically, so that we grasp that the Lord does not call upon us to follow the food laws or cleanness regulations. These regulations point to something greater: to the holiness and new lives we are to live as believers (1 Cor 5:6-8; 1

Pet 1:15-16). Nor is it the case, as the NT plainly teaches, that believers are still under the Mosaic law (Gal 3:15-4:7; 2 Cor 3:7-18). The old covenant was intended to be in force for a certain period of salvation history. Now that the fulfillment in Christ has dawned, we are no longer under the covenant the Lord instituted with Israel. Hence, it is a mistake to think that the laws binding on Israel as a nation should serve as the paradigm for nation states today—as promulgated by Theonomists in our day. We must recognize in our preaching the difference between Israel as the people of God and the church of Jesus Christ. Israel was God's theocratic people, representing both God's covenant people and a political entity. But the church of Jesus Christ is not a political entity with a charter of laws for nation states. The church is composed of people from every people, tongue, tribe, and nation. Failure to appreciate this difference between the old and new covenant could wreak havoc on our congregations.

If we don't understand the differences between the old covenant and new, we will have a difficult time proclaiming the possession of the land in Joshua. Surely the promise for the church of Jesus Christ is not that we will possess the land of Canaan some day! But upon reading the NT we learn that the promise of the land is understood typologically and also escalated into a final fulfillment in the NT. Hebrews explains that the promise of rest given under Joshua was never intended to be the final rest for the people of God (Heb 3:7-4:13). Paul explains in Rom 4:13 that the land promise for Abraham cannot be confined to Canaan but has been universalized to include the whole world. We discover in Hebrews that we as believers do not wait for an earthly city but a

heavenly city (Heb 11:10, 14-16; 13:14), a city to come. Or, as Rev 21-22 put it, we await the heavenly Jerusalem, which is nothing other than a new creation. If we preach from Joshua, and we do not emphasize our inheritance in Christ and the new creation, then we have failed miserably to communicate the storyline of scripture in expositing the book. We have truncated the message so that our people have failed to see how all of scripture is fulfilled in Christ, how all the promises of God are yes and amen in Christ Jesus (2 Cor 1:20).

If we preach the scriptures canonically, using biblical theology, then we will proclaim Christ from both the OT and the NT. We must avoid the danger, of course, of simplistic allegorizing or forced connections between the testaments. We will not fall prey to such errors if we have properly done the work of biblical theology, if we follow the hermeneutic of the apostolic writers themselves. The apostolic writers, after all, believed that the OT itself pointed to Christ and was fulfilled in him. And they were taught their hermeneutic by Jesus Christ himself, just as he opened the scriptures to Cleopas and his friend on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24). In this regard, some have claimed that the hermeneutic of the apostles was inspired but should not be imitated today.<sup>11</sup> Such a view is flawed because it suggests that the fulfillment the apostles saw in the OT does not accord with what the texts truly mean. If this is the case, the connections drawn between the testaments are arbitrary, and the apostles (and Christ himself!) do not serve as models for interpreting the OT today.

If we believe, however, that the apostles were inspired and wise readers of the OT, then we have a pattern for reading all of

the OT in light of the fulfillment accomplished in Jesus Christ. The storyline and structures of the OT all point towards him and are completed in him.<sup>12</sup> When we read about the promise of Abraham in the OT, we realize that it is fulfilled in Christ Jesus. The shadows of OT sacrifices find their substance in Christ. Feasts like Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles point to Christ as the Passover sacrifice, to the gift of the Spirit, and to Jesus as the Light of the world. Believers are no longer required to observe the sabbath, for it is one of the shadows of the old covenant (Col 2:16-17; cf. Rom 14:5) and belongs to the Sinai covenant that is no longer in force for believers (Gal 3:15-4:7; 2 Cor 3:4-18; Heb 7:11-10:18). The sabbath looks forward to the rest that is now ours in Christ which will be consummated in the heavenly rest in the last day (Heb 3:12-4:11). The temple anticipates Christ as the true temple, while circumcision finds its consummation in the circumcision of the heart anchored in the cross of Christ and secured by the work of the Spirit. David as the king of Israel and a man after God's own heart does not represent the apex of the kingship, for David is a type of Jesus Christ as the greater David, who unlike David, was sinless and who is the Messianic king who through his ministry, death, and resurrection has inaugurated the promises God has made to his people.

If we do not preach the OT in terms of the whole canon, we will either restrict ourselves to moral lessons from the OT, or, what is just as likely, is that we will rarely preach from the OT. As Christians we know that much of the OT no longer speaks directly to our situation today. For example, God has not promised to liberate us from political bondage as he freed



Israel from Egypt. The land of Israel is politically volatile today, but Christians do not believe that their joy will come from living in Israel, nor do they think that worship consists in going to the temple to offer sacrifice. However, if we do not preach the OT canonically, in light of biblical theology, it will too often be passed over in Christian preaching. And in doing so, we not only rob ourselves of wonderful treasures from the word of God, and but we also fail to see the depth and multifaceted character of biblical revelation. We put ourselves in a position where we do not read the OT as Jesus and the apostles did, and hence we do not see that the God's promises are yes and amen in Jesus Christ.

Reading the OT canonically does not mean that the OT is not read in its historical cultural context. The first task of every interpreter is to read the OT in its own right, discerning the meaning of the biblical author when it was written. Further, as we argued above, each OT book must be read in light of its antecedent theology, so that the storyline of scripture is grasped. But we also must read all of scripture canonically, so that the OT is read in light of the whole story—the fulfillment that has come in Jesus Christ. We always consider the perspective of the whole, of the divine author in doing biblical theology and in the preaching of God's word. We read the scriptures both from front to back and back to front. We always consider the developing story as well as the end of the story.

### Conclusion

Our task as preachers is to proclaim the whole counsel of God. We will not fulfill our calling if as preachers we fail to do biblical theology. We may get many com-

pliments from our people for our moral lessons and our illustrations, but we are not faithfully serving our congregations if they do not understand how the whole of scripture points to Christ, and if they do not gain a better understanding from us of the storyline of the Bible. May God help us to be faithful teachers and preachers, so that every person under our charge will be presented perfect in Christ.

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>All citations from scripture in this essay are from the English Standard Version.

<sup>2</sup>D. A. Carson, "Systematic and Biblical Theology," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (eds. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 94. Another definition is set forth by Charles H. H. Scobie, "Biblical Theology may be defined as the ordered study of the understanding of the revelation of God contained in the canonical scriptures of the Old and New Testaments" ("The Challenge of Biblical Theology," *Tyndale Bulletin* 42 [1991]: 36).

<sup>3</sup>Brian S. Rosner, "Biblical Theology," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 5.

<sup>4</sup>Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Exegesis and Hermeneutics," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 56.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Carson, "Systematic and Biblical Theology," 100.

<sup>7</sup>Gerhard Hasel, "Biblical Theology: Then, Now, and Tomorrow," *Horizons of Biblical Theology* 4 (1982): 66.

<sup>8</sup>For the following discussion, see Carson, "Systematic and Biblical Theology," 101-02.

<sup>9</sup>Scobie, "The Challenge of Biblical Theology," 50-51.

<sup>10</sup>Walter Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Exegetical*

*Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 134-40.

<sup>11</sup>Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

<sup>12</sup>For the importance of Christ-centeredness in our preaching, see Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture: The Application of Biblical Theology to Expository Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999); Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2003).

Biblical Theology and Preaching 195. the judgment of Egypt at the exodus, and when he planted them in the new Eden of the promised land, their task was the same as Adam's to expand the boundaries of the place where God was served, worshiped, and known until God's glory covered the dry lands as the waters cover the sea. After the final rebellion, Jesus will lead His people into the new and better Eden, the new heaven and new earth, and the exile will finally be over. God's glory will cover the dry lands as the waters cover the sea. 6. See S. G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, *New Studies in Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003). Biblical theology may limit itself to the theology of Genesis, the Pentateuch, Matthew, Romans, or even all of Paul. And yet biblical theology may also comprehend the entire canon of scripture, in which the storyline of the scriptures as a whole is integrated. Too often expositional preachers limit themselves to Leviticus, Matthew, or Revelation without considering the place they inhabit in the storyline of redemptive history. At the risk of oversimplifying, doing good biblical theology while preaching consists of two basic steps: look backward and then look at the whole. Look backward—antecedent theology. Walter Kaiser reminds us that we should consider the antecedent theology of each book as we preach the scriptures.[1]. Biblical theology is that exercise in which an attempt is made to state systematically the faith affirmations of the Bible. This definition acknowledges that the Bible is a book of faith, that is to say, it records the redemptive meanings of the encounter of God with man. The earliest preaching centered on the Resurrection. NT theology must start from this "rock-bottom fact" and move out into the varied dimensions of its meaning for the early Christians. Two conservative theologies have appeared during the last decade, one by F. Stagg, *NT Theology* (1962) and the other by C. C. Ryrie, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (1959). The Bible must function as a corrective to systematic theology and biblical theology aids in this work. ("Biblical Theology, Contemporary," *IDB*, I, 418, 419).